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Major Trends in Mental Retardation

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national association
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REVIEW

Mental Retardation and Behavioural Research, edited by A. D. B. Clarke & A. M. Clarke. New York: Longman, 1973. 279 pp.; \$17.50.

A study group convened by the Institute for Research into Mental Retardation met at the University of Hull in September 1971 to discuss the relationship between behavioral research and progress in mental retardation, and this book is a record of the papers presented and the discussions that followed. Included are sections on research strategy and methodology; social research and problems of institutional management; the training of teachers and their attitudes toward research; the technology of learning as applied to educational and industrial training; psychological models in research and practice; and learning in the young, mentally handicapped child. Many of the presentations can stand alone, and provide informative reading for students and workers in various areas of research and mental retardation. The views expressed represent those of a wide range of both professionals and nonprofessionals concerned with mental retardation.

Two key issues are the role of feedback in scientific progress, and appreciation of mental retardation as a developmental problem requiring coordination among people associated with each developmental stage.

The study group offers no easy solutions or panaceas for problems that beset workers in mental retardation. It does, however, lay bare some major assumptions underlying recent research in behavior change and mental retardation; discusses candidly obstacles to implementing findings derived from basic and applied research; and explores the social, economic, and political ramifications of mental deficiency. Some of its sections may be a bit too technical for those unfamiliar with the experimental literature; but I recommend this book without hesitation to researchers, practitioners, and educators.

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